

BUILD SKILLS

The Minister's Black Veil

LITERARY ANALYSIS


A **parable** is a simple, usually brief, story that teaches a moral lesson. Unlike a fable, which features animal characters, a parable features human beings. A parable is a type of **allegory**—a story with both a literal and a symbolic meaning. In subtitling this story “A Parable,” Hawthorne indicates that the story conveys an important moral message. As you read, think about the lesson Hawthorne wants his story to communicate.

The veil that Mr. Hooper vows never to remove is a **symbol**—something that has meaning in itself while also standing for something greater. To discover the veil’s symbolic meaning, notice Hawthorne’s descriptions of the veil and its effects on the characters in the story.

READING STRATEGY

When the message of a work of fiction is conveyed indirectly, as it is in this symbolic story, the reader must **draw inferences**, or conclusions, by looking closely at details, especially description and dialogue. Use this chart to draw inferences about the story’s characters and events.

Description/Dialogue



Inference